

### Christopherson Homes



### PROJECT

#### *Wisteria - Rocklin, CA*

Set among the rolling hills and towering oaks of Rocklin is Whitney Ranch, a master planned community offering a rich tradition of gracious living. Wisteria at Whitney Ranch is a collection of three home designs with distinctive western ranch, ranch farmhouse and adobe ranch styling that celebrates the heritage and the relaxed mood of the setting. Home sites average from 9,000 to 10,000 square feet, with single and two-story homes ranging from 2,700 to 4,600 square feet with four to six bedrooms. Neighboring open space gives each home its own serenity. Pricing starts from the mid \$700,000's.

### MAKING THE DECISION

Facing a lackluster housing market, Christopherson Homes wanted to identify offerings that would further set its Wisteria community apart. "You need something extra to bring in buyers in this market," says Jan Willett, project purchasing coordinator for Christopherson. With 25 of the community's 60 homes already complete, selling at a rate of about one a month, the builder was eager to differentiate itself to boost sales. Honing in on the growing concern among Californians to conserve energy and preserve natural resources, *they determined that building energy efficient homes complete with solar panels would be an ideal way to attract more buyers.*

Aware of the California Energy Commission's New Solar Home Partnership (NSHP), Christopherson contacted heating and cooling experts Beutler Corporation to advise them on energy efficient measures, along with Old Country Roofing (OCR) to help install solar panels and assist with the NSHP application.

### CHALLENGE

*Being the first builder to apply for the NSHP meant that Christopherson was treading in uncharted territory.*

Naturally, questions arose regarding what documentation was required to complete the NSHP application. "Knowing what to ask for and who to ask was probably our biggest challenge," says Bill Reaugh, technical services manager for OCR. "Once I understood what was needed, *I found the process to be pretty straightforward and understandable.*"

Given that construction was already underway, Christopherson Homes also needed to make some modifications to existing home plans to ensure the proper energy efficiency measures were incorporated into the homes and properly documented and approved by Certified Energy Plans Examiners (CEPE).

### SOLUTION

Project purchasing coordinator Jan Willett reported that the energy efficiency improvements suggested by Beutler were relatively easy to make. They increased the insulation in attics and walls, installed double-paned windows and high-efficiency heating and air conditioning systems.

The OCR Solar Solutions division of Old Country Roofing supplied and installed photovoltaic (PV) systems that included BP Solar Energy Tiles and Xantrex inverters. The solar systems produce 2.4 kilowatts (kW) of electricity using building-integrated modules. OCR Solar Solutions also completed the NSHP application on behalf of Christopherson Homes.

### Christopherson Homes

"We knew we wanted to offer solar in this community, but the only way we could afford to do so was to take advantage of the rebates from both the Energy Commission and PG&E. They really helped us offset the costs and enabled us to offer buyers something above and beyond what the average new home is equipped with."

— Jan Willett, project purchasing coordinator for Christopherson Homes

By enrolling in the NSHP, Christopherson Homes was eligible to receive a \$5,276 incentive per home from the California Energy Commission and a \$2,000 new construction energy efficiency program rebate from PG&E. *In addition, individual home owners are eligible for a federal tax credit of \$2,000 for each solar home.*

### PERFORMANCE RESULTS

As the first builder to enroll in the NSHP, Christopherson Homes was able to promote Wisteria as an energy efficient, solar development, garnering significant media attention. They immediately saw an increase in foot traffic to the community. In fact, once the new solar energy savings systems were announced, the builder sold five homes in the first two weeks. "In the current market, we continue to see increased traffic and sales at this community and we're convinced that solar is a major contributing factor. In fact, other builders in the area are starting to add solar because they've seen the success we've had with it at Wisteria," says Jan Willett, project purchasing coordinator for Christopherson Homes.

Both Christopherson and OCR representatives agree they will continue to work with the Energy Commission's NSHP. They were so impressed by how the solar homes sold in the current market that they have looked into retrofitting three previously built homes in the community with solar panels.

### CHRISTOPHERSON HOMES

Founded in 1978 by Keith and Brenda Christopherson, the company has been voted Sonoma County Builder of the Year several times. Its communities are known for quality and design in highly desirable locations throughout Northern California. After move-in, the Christopherson warranty teams have the authority and skills to resolve service situations promptly. With over 3,500 homes in more than 30 communities, Christopherson's neighborhoods are situated throughout Napa, Sonoma, Solano, Sacramento, El Dorado and Placer counties.

### specifications

CITY: Rocklin, CA

# OF SOLAR HOMES: 35

SOLAR PROVIDER: Old Country Roofing

UTILITY: Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E)

AVERAGE SYSTEM SIZE: 2.4 kW

ANNUAL ENERGY PRODUCTION: Estimated 3,500 kWh per home

MODULE TYPE: BP Solar Tiles

INVERTER: Xantrex